

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002455

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

MUAFFAQ AL-RUBAIE

Classified By: Political-Military Counselor Ronald E. Neumann
for reason 1.4 (b)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The ITG is disorganized and ineffective according to Rubaie. He characterized the government as in crisis with the Kurds provoked especially by the absence of any mention of federalism in the Prime Ministers State of the Union message. Additionally, Talabani is angry about the responsibilities of Finance Minister Allawi, which have included subjects he and Barham Salih wanted in the Ministry of Planning with Salih. Rubaie also doubts that the Prime Minister understands the political nature of the insurgency. Therefore his political strategy for dealing with it is inadequate. Rubaie may have failed to cement his personal relationship with Ja'afari and that could be underlying his analysis but he is clearly much less happy with the Ja'afari government than he was a month ago. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) A month ago Rubaie was full of optimism for the new government. Now he is pessimistic. In a meeting with PolMilCons Neumann June 8, Rubaie characterized Ja'afari as disorganized and particularly condemned his lack of any approach to building institutions, something Rubaie is keen on. He said the lack of meetings of the Ministerial Council for National Security (MCNS) is simply because the Prime Minister does not understand its value or who needs to be involved in national security issues. Among the cabinet committees recently composed is one on defense and security (unlike the MCNS the cabinet committees do not involve the coalition or principal allies). However the cabinet security committee did not include the Chief of Intelligence or the Foreign Minister. Rubaie caustically asked how the Foreign Minister could accurately represent policy if he was not involved in it when security was so fundamental to relations with the neighbors. Rubaie also condemned Ja'afari for not listening, that he gives lengthy explanations, is difficult to talk to and does not respond to argument.

¶3. (C) Rubaie characterized the relations with the Kurds as a crisis (we have reported this in more detail septels). He said both Talabani and Barzani were furious that Rubaie's State of the Union message had no mention of federalism. Additionally, Talabani is angry that Finance Minister Allawi rather than Planning Minister Barham Salih has the lead for planning for Brussels. Rubaie knew about Talabani's meeting on the same day with Abdul Aziz Hakim to figure out how to deal with Ja'afari.

¶4. (C) Ja'afari said the Prime Minister is making no use of the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS) director. Contrary to what Chalabi said last week, Rubaie said that INIS Director Sharwani is making frequent attempts to be in touch with the Prime Minister and to offer him briefings. However the Prime Minister does not respond. Rubaie said that he is in regular touch with Sharwani who is very frustrated. Rubaie went on to say that none of the Deputy Prime Ministers or members of the Presidency Council receive any regular flow of information. Rubaie has offered to provide a weekly intelligence briefing to each of the Deputy Prime Ministers and is now making the same offer to the two Vice Presidents and President Talabani. Rubaie said that he has regular conversations with a SCIRI senior advisor and Iraqi Vice President Adil Abdel-Mahdi who is frustrated at the incoherence of the government. (COMMENT: As an alternative candidate for Prime Minister Abdel-Mahdi is not quite a disinterested observer. END COMMENT) Rubaie questioned whether Ja'afari really understands the nature of the insurgency. He quoted Ja'afari and a separate conversation with Minister of State for National Security Al-Anzi. Each one of them apparently said that given a free hand they could clean up the insurgency in two or three months. Rubaie explained that what they meant was that the insurgency was based solely on die-hard Ba'athists and criminals who would give up or run away if faced with sufficient force. Rubaie does not accept this characterization of the insurgency. He thinks it is far more complex and more political. The Jihadists won't give up and there is an element within the insurgency that sincerely believes it is fighting to rid the country of a foreign occupier. Rubaie said that without the proper understanding of the nature of the insurgency it is extremely difficult or impossible for Ja'afari to build an adequate political strategy to deal with it.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: It is possible that Rubaie has failed to get

some position or policy he wants adopted and that his analysis is affected with sourness as a result. However it is also true that Rubaie has an abiding and sometimes unrealistic desire to build institutions and go beyond personal politics. He is therefore all the more frustrated that Ja'afari is uninterested in building systems and is constructing instead a government centralized completely on himself with chaotic staffing procedures. END COMMENT.

Jeffrey